



SACOG Board of Directors

April 7, 2010

Authorize Release of Draft Principles for Setting Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Targets

Issue: What are the principles for developing recommended greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for SACOG to recommend to the California Air Resources Board (CARB)?

Recommendation: The Transportation Committee recommends that the Board release the six principles below and delegate authority to the Transportation Committee to release draft targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction for public comment at its May meeting.

Committee Action/Discussion: SB 375 provides the 18 regions in the state the ability to recommend their own greenhouse gas emission targets. This must occur before June 30, when the California Air Resources Board must release draft greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets for the regions. CARB must set final targets by September 30, 2010.

Staff recommends that SACOG use the following six principles in establishing its recommended targets.

1. SACOG is committed to information-based, performance driven decision-making. It will use performance metrics to guide the 2011 MTP in a variety of areas (i.e., not just greenhouse gas emissions), including reducing per capita congestion; vehicle miles traveled, environmental impacts, and increasing modes of travel other than single occupancy automobile use; safety; goods movement; and accessibility of SACOG's diverse population to transportation services. The SB 375 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target will be one of several performance metrics addressing key policy goals (the attached list of principles for the current MTP will provide a starting place for developing the comprehensive list of metrics).
2. All performance goals should be established based on up-to-date forecasts and assumptions about future population, employment, and demographic trends. All future performance goals should take account of current performance, based on the most reliable regional data sources. The last five years have shown that key factors like the economy and fuel prices can change rapidly and unpredictably; the performance metrics should be established after evaluating sensitivity analyses on these uncertain factors, and key assumptions should be clearly documented to allow for monitoring and updating for changing conditions in the future.
3. The performance goals should be consistent with the Blueprint growth principles and should maximize the opportunities for new CEQA reform benefits included in SB 375 to help the region implement the Blueprint growth principles.
4. The performance goals should be based on reasonable assumptions that federal, state, local and private funding will identify and implement funding sources sufficient to build and operate a functional, effective, transportation system for all modes of travel (i.e., it should not assume that current downturns in transportation funding sources continue for the next 25 years). However, the impacts of failure to secure adequate funding levels should also be considered and clearly identified.

5. The performance goals should be realistic in targeting greater success and better performance in later years (e.g., 2035) than in early years (e.g., 2020).
6. Given funding challenges and federal requirements related to financial and land use constraints, it may be necessary for SACOG to adopt a tiered MTP in 2011, with a "base plan" and a "preferred plan." The base plan would be the officially-acknowledged plan for federal air quality conformity and other purposes and may fall short on some of the performance goals, including the SB 375 targets. The preferred plan would reflect the region's aspirations of the type of transportation system it wants to construct and operate and the land use pattern it wishes to build. The preferred plan would be expected to have superior performance and may also be an alternative planning scenario under the terms of SB 375.

Staff is updating the scenario modeling to inform this target-setting process that it has shared with the Board over the last few months to reflect updated growth assumptions. While the new forecast has not yet been formally adopted by the Board, it is the best we have to work with given the calendar limits of SB 375. We are also coordinating our work with the major MPOs in the state and the staff of the Air Resources Board to try to ensure some standardization and comparability of results, where appropriate (e.g., fuel price assumptions, financial constraints, etc.).

This process will be complete in time for the April committee or Board meetings. Therefore, we recommend that the Board delegate to the Transportation Committee the authority to review these updated scenario modeling results and release a draft greenhouse gas emissions target for purposes of public comment. Those comments would then be considered at the June Transportation Committee meeting and the committee will be asked to forward a recommended target to the Board for action at its June meeting.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Executive Director

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Attachment

Key Staff: Mike McKeever, Executive Director, (916) 340-6205
Kacey Lizon, Senior Planner, (916) 340-6265

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BOARD-ADOPTED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE MTP2035

Principle 1—Smart Land Use

Design a transportation system to support good growth patterns, including increased housing and transportation options, focusing more growth inward and improving the economic viability of rural areas.

Principle 2—Environmental Quality and Sustainability

Minimize direct and indirect transportation impacts on the environment for cleaner air and natural resource protection.

Principle 3—Financial Stewardship

A transportation system that delivers cost-effective results that are feasible to construct and maintain.

Principle 4—Economic Vitality

Efficiently connect people to jobs and get goods to market.

Principle 5—Access & Mobility

Improve opportunities for businesses and citizens to easily access goods, jobs, services and housing.

Principle 6—Equity & Choice

Provide real, viable travel choices for all people throughout our diverse region.